

Preventing Love;

OR, <sup>4379.a.58</sup>

GOD'S LOVE

TO US,

The Cause of our Love to him.

BEING A

S E R M O N

Preached on 1 JOHN iv. 19.

After the Administration of the SACRAMENT of the  
LORD'S SUPPER at *Portmoak*, *June 3. 1723.*

By Mr. RALPH ERSKINE Minister of the Gos-  
pel at *Dumfermling.*

1 JOHN iv. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved  
God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be  
the Propitiation for our Sins.*

B E L F A S T,

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## S E R M O N

Preached at *Portmoak*, June 3d, 1723.

I JOHN iv. 19. *We loved him, because he first loved us.*



THE great Design of the Gospel, Gospel Ordinances and Sacraments, is to commend the Love of God in Christ. The Sacrament of the Supper is a Love-Feast, and they that have their Senses spiritually exercised therein, will find readily all their Senses filled with *Love*. What do they bear but *Love*? What do they see but *Love*? What do they taste but *Love*? What do they feel but *Love*? What do they smell but *Love*? It is a sweet Account we have of God, *ver. 16.* O happy they that have so learned the Gospel-Catechism from their Experience, as to be able to answer to that Question, *What is God?* And to say, *God is Love*: He is Essential, Boundless, Bottomless, Infinite *Love*. It is true, if we look to him in the Glass of the *Law*, we will see him to be all *Wrath*, a consuming *Fire* out of Christ; but look to him in the Glass of the *Gospel*, and you'll see him all *Love*, a God in Christ reconciling the World to himself, and the Sight thereof produces *Love*; for *we love him, because he first loved us.* The Text gives us a short Account of the whole Business betwixt God and a Believer. They love one another: Here is Love

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descending,

descending, God in Christ loving his Saints ; and here is Love ascending, the Saints in Christ loving God, and the former begetting the latter. When Love hath descended from Heaven to Earth, it hath finished the Half of its Course ; when it ascends from Earth to Heaven again, then the Circle is completed.

Here is, 1. *A Description of God's Love* ; he loved us first. 2. *A Description of our Love to God* ; we love him for this Cause. And, (1.) We have God's Love described ; *He first loved us*. If we were to make a critical Division, we might notice how it is described. 1<sup>st</sup>, In the *Act loved*. O wonder that ever the Heart of God should have acted that Way towards any Sinner of *Adam's Race*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Subject *loving, He loved* : O! a glorious *He*, the infinitely holy and just God. 3<sup>dly</sup>, The Object loved ; he loved *Us*, poor wretched apostate *us*. 4<sup>thly</sup>, The Quality of this Love, he loved *us*, and first loved *us* ; intimating, both that it is ancient Love, for it is in the preterite Time, he *loved*, yea loved from Eternity ; and also that it is antecedent Love, *he first loved us* before we had a Being, before we were capable to love him, yea while we were yet Enemies. We have the Saints Love described, *we love him, because he loved us*, which is also described in these four. (1.) The Act of *Love* ; and indeed this Love of ours is but a Drop of the Ocean of his Love. (2.) The Subject *loving we*, we Believers, we that have got a Taste of his Love. (3.) the Object beloved, *him*, we love, *him*, who deserves our Love above all Things in Heaven and Earth. (4.) The Rise and Source of this Love of ours, we love him, because he *first* loved us ; his Love is the incentive and productive Cause of our Love. But I refer the further Explication of the Text to the Prosecution of a Doctrine

Many Things might here be observed : As, 1<sup>st</sup>, *None can truly love God, but such as are beloved of him*. Many speak of the Love of God, as if it were natural to them : But as true Love is a Spark of heavenly Fire, so there is no Love natural to Man, but

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but the Love of Sin. 2dly, *That God bath a People in the World that love him, because they are loved of him.* There is in God a common Love, whereby he loved the whole World, and a special Love whereby he loves the Saints, and so there is in the Saints a common Love, by which they love all God's Creatures, and a peculiar Love that belongs to God only, whom they prize above all other Things. 3dly, *That Divine Love works freely.* God does not trade with us upon any Terms, Conditions, or valuable Considerations in and about us. We can neither buy Heaven nor beg it, it must be given: Let not the greatest Civilian presume; let not the greatest Prodigal despair; God's Love is first on the Field. 4thly, *That as God and his Saints love one another, so the Reason of Saints loving God, is God's loving them;* there is no Reason of God's Love, but because he loves. But there is Reason enough for our Love, because he loved us. The Believer loves God upon God's Account, and for good Reason; God loves us without any Reason, or any Cause from without himself, but we have all the Reason in the World why we should love God. Many say, they love Christ, but they have not any Reason for it; they that Love him know why they do so. There are three Things create Love, *Beauty, Interest, Love.* 1. *Beauty,* and O, but Christ is *white and ruddy, and altogether lovely.* 2. *Interest,* the more a Man sees Christ to be his own, the more he loves him. 3. *Love,* the Love of God is the great Parent of Love, it begets Love, *we love him because he first loved us.* But having taken this short View of the Text, the Doctrine I fix upon is this, OBSERVATION, *God's Love to his People is the Source of their Love to him;* their Love is influenced by the Faith of his Love, his Love is the Cause of theirs, *We love him because he first loved us.* Now the general Method that seems most native is, 1. *To speak of God's Love to his People.* 2. *Of the Saints Love to God.* 3. *The Influence his Love bath upon theirs as the Cause of it.* 4. *Apply.*

1st Head, 1. To speak of God's Love to his People;

and indeed to speak of it is to speak of that which is unspeakable and unconceivable, for *it passes Knowledge*; only we may notice a few Things that the Scripture says of this Love. I would offer some Remarks anent this Love of God, and then shew more particularly the Import of this Expression, *he first loved us*. 1. I would offer some Remarks anent the Love of God. Remark 1. *That the Fountain of this Love is God the Father*. Love begins in order of Nature with the Father, hence says Christ, *I will not say, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you*, John xvi. 26. Christ prays for all the Fruits and Flowings of the Father's Love to his People, but not for the Father's Love it self. You mistake greatly, Sirs, if you think that Christ doth purchase and pray for the Father's Love to his People; nay, it was the Father's Love that sent Christ to purchase all the Fruits and Communications of his Love. *God so loved the World*, &c. The Love of God cannot be purchast, there is no need of any Mediation here, *I will not say that I will pray the Father* in this respect, *for the Father himself loves you*. Here is the Fountain of the Love. But Remark, 2. *That the Channel thro' which this Love of God does run from this Fountain, is the Lord Jesus Christ*; God's Love does not vent it self towards any Sinner, to the Disparagement of his infinite Holiness and Justice, and therefore it vents and flows in and through Christ, *Whom God hath set forth to be the Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare*, &c. Rom. iii. 25. God hath taken a marvellous Way to manifest his Love: When he would shew his Power, he makes a World, when he would shew his Wisdom, he put it in a Frame and Form that discovered vast Wisdom, when he would manifest the Grandeur and Glory of his Name more, he makes a Heaven, and puts Angels, Arch-angels, Principalities and Powers therein; and when he will manifest Love, what will he not do? It is a pity we should deny this Love, because God hath taken such a great and mysterious Way of manifesting it in Christ, his Death, his Blood, his

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his *Righteousness*; here is the Channel. 3. *The Streams of Divine Love that flow from this Fountain in this Channel are vastly great*, Pardon, Peace, Safety, Adoption, Justification, Sanctification, Audience of Prayer, a Blessing on all Providences, and everlasting Triumph in Heaven. I cannot enlarge upon these, or any other of the Streams that flow from this Love of God; the Streams are so many, so great that we should lose our selves there as well as in the Fountain, if we were to dive thereinto; only we are blessed in Christ with all Spiritual Blessings, and this Love of God, and all the Fruits of it, is to be enjoyed in the Fellowship of the Spirit, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. where we read of *the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Spirit*, where Christ is first mentioned, because he is next to us, as being the Channel thro' which the Love of God is vented, and this Love of God, and Grace of Christ is enjoyed in the Communion and Fellowship of the holy Ghost, and that this Love is from the Father as the Fountain, in the Son as the Channel, by the holy Ghost as the immediate Conveyance. 4. *The Vessels into which these Streams are vented, or this Love is poured, are Sinners*, even to them it is declared that he is the Lord, *The Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning Iniquity, &c.* and that God is Love. This *Motto*, that *God is Love*, is inscribed on the Gates of Heaven, and none will think strange of that, because the Love of God in bringing any Sinner of *Adam's* Race there, is manifested to the highest. But we would think strange, if one should say that this is even the Inscription written upon the Gates of Hell, that God is Love; why his Love to himself, and his own Justice is manifested there, yea not only so, but Millions are damned, because they slight redeeming Love, and their Conscience galls them for contemning all the Offers of Love. But that which concerns us especially, is, that we may read this Inscription daily upon the beautiful Gate of the Temple, I mean in Gospel Ordinances, that *God is Love*, for therein he manifests his

his Love to Sinners, even to Sinners of *Adam's Family* in the general Dispensation of the Gospel, and particularly to the Vessels of Mercy, in the special Operation of the Spirit upon them in the Fulness of Time, wherein he hath designed to pour out his Spirit, and so to pour in his Love. But to omit many Things here,

I come 2. To shew the particular import of this Expression, *He first loved us*. And 1. It says, *That his Love is eternal Love, and from everlasting; He first loved us. I have loved thee with an everlasting Love*, Jer. xiii. 3. As it is to everlasting, so it is from everlasting, as it will never have an end, so it never had a beginning, but is as ancient as the Eternal God is. O! what an amazing Thought is this, that God should have had Thoughts of Love towards any poor Sinners, like you and me, from the Beginning of his *Being*, which is without a Beginning. But, to prevent mistakes, you should know that the Love of God is twofold, his Love of *Destination*, and his Love of *Approbation*; his Love of Destination and Purpose, whereby he is said *to have chosen us in Christ before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children*, Eph. i. 4, 5. And this Love he is said to manifest even before a Man's Conversion, 1 John iv. 9, 10. *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved him, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sin*. Again, there is his Love of *Approbation* and Friendship, such as that spoken of, John xiv. 23. *If a Man love me and keep my Words, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our Abode with him*. Now the Object of the former Love, *to wit*, the Love of Destination is every Elect Soul, and that from all Eternity, as well as in Time, even before their Conversion and Union to Christ, the Object of the latter, *to wit*, his Love of *Approbation* and Friendship, is every Believer united to Christ, to whom he begins

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begins to manifest his everlasting Love personally ; for though he loved and approved of them from Eternity in Christ, yet they cannot be said to be actually loved and approved in their own Persons, till once their Persons are unite to Christ. Tho' God's Love be everlasting and immutable as himself is, yet there is a Time wherein he begins to manifest his Love, there is no *Variation or Shadow of turning in God's Love*, all the Change is in the Person beloved, not in God. It is mere Blasphemy to say, that God begins to love them whom before he hated, in a proper and strict sense. It is true, the Elect are *Children of Wrath even as others* by Nature, whatever they are by Divine Destination, being ever the Objects of God's Love in this sense, yet in some sense he begins to love them, in respect of the manifesting of his Love to them, and the outletting of his Love upon them, when his Love is taken, not so much for his immanent Act, as for his transient Act, not for any Thing in himself, but for what flows from him to them ; the Love that is in himself is still the same, but the Acts of Love that flow forth to them, these begin to appear when he *manifests himself to them as he does not to the World*, when he comes to them for their Salvation, and reveals his Son in them ; and here also he is still before-hand with them, he first loved us. 2. *He first loved us*, it says, *that his Love is antecedent Love* : As it is first in point of Time, yea, from all Eternity, so it is first in point of order in Time. We cannot manifest our Love to him, till first he manifest his Love to us. Men may feign Love to God and Christ, before they know any thing of God's Love in Christ towards them, but they truly have no Love to him, even the Elect themselves have no Love to him by Nature, they are Enemies, and *without God, and without Christ in the World* ; buried in the Grave of Sin and Corruption even as others ; dead in Trespasses and Sins, and Slaves to divers Lusts, the Devil dwelling in them, working in them, reigning in them, as a Man dwells in his House, or works in his Shop, or reigns upon his Throne ; they have no more Acquaintance



quaintance with him, or Love to him than others, till by Grace they be regenerate, and made to come to God in Christ, and be raised up to a new and lively Hope. Common favours indeed they may have, and God is ay sure to notice his Elect, and to have a care of them, and many remarkable Deliverances will they meet with, even while unconverted; you will find few gracious Folk but they will have even good Tales to tell of the Lord's Kindness to them in their Youth, but yet Love and Hatred cannot be known by these things that are seen, for ill Men have had the like Deliverances, and manifold common Mercies, and common Graces perhaps also, but all this while they are Strangers to true Love to God, till once some Rays of his everlasting Love go before them, and make way for the breaking of their Enmity, and engaging them to Love him. (3.) *He first loved us,* it says, *that his Love is absolutely free Love.* If he first loved us, before we have any Love to him, or loveliness in us. O how free is it! His Love is free in several respects. It is Love in that it is without Force or Constraint, we must even put our selves in his Reverence, and not think to compel God, as if he could be obliged to it; nay, if we get any Thing, we must be in Grace's Debt, and ly at Grace's Door as poor Beggars for an Alms for Christ's Sake.

It is free Love in that it is *without Reluctancy*, it is with all his Heart. There are some Objects come to our Door, and tho' we give them an Alms, yet it is with some Reluctancy, we are not so free hearted towards them as to others whom we have a Kindness for; these we will give to, with all our Heart, we give them with as much pleasure as if we were getting to our selves: So God's special Gifts are given with all his Heart, he takes pleasure in giving, he delights in shewing Mercy.

It is free Love, in that it is *without Merit and Motive*; his Love is neither desired nor deserved, and yet he loves; *I will love them freely*, I'll do it undeservedly, even while they deserve to be thrust down to the lowest Hell, *Not for your Sakes do I this, be it known unto you.* It

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It is free Love in that it is *without Price*, he seeks nothing for what he gives, he takes nothing for it; nay, he deals with us as poor Beggars that have nothing to offer for what he gives, and nothing wherewith to recompense his Kindness after he hath given.

It is free in Opposition to *all proper Terms and Conditions*. Papiſts tell us of the Merit of *Congruity*, and the Merit of *Condignity*, and many ignorant Protestants think they do enough when they exclude the Word *Merit*, but in the room of Merit they bring in a World of *Conditions*, and tell us upon Condition you do so and so, then God will do this and that to you; telling us, God hath made a Covenant with us, not like the Covenant of Works, but upon easier Terms, requiring only some little Things accommodated to our Weakness; "It cannot be called *Merit*, say they, for there is no proportion betwixt what we do, and what we get; it is, say they, but as if one should hold out a Penny, and get a Kingdom for it." Many such subtile Reasonings of Men there are, that tend to exalt Self, and Self-righteousness, which would all evanish before the Light of this very Text, if viewed in a Spiritual and Evangelical manner, *He first loved us.* 4. *He first loved us.* It says, that his Love is a *preventing Love*, it prevents our Love, and all the Good that can be about us, for he prevents with the Blessings of his Goodness. I might here illustrate this, by shewing, 1. The Object of his Love, whom he prevents. 2. The Time of his Love, when he prevents them. 3. The Dawning of his Love upon them, whereby he prevents them. 4. The Fruits and Effects of his Love, in them, wherein he prevents them. 1. *The Object of his Love whom he prevents.* If we view whom he loves, we cannot but see it to be preventing Love; the Love of God lighted upon fallen Men, not fallen Angels, tho' much more noble and spiritual Beings, and why, even *because he hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*; his Love lighteth upon the poor, foolish, weak Nothings of this World for ordinary, not upon the wise, noble and mighty, not many such

*such are called*, he reveals these Things to *Babes*, not to the *Wise* and *Prudent*, of the World, that we may not think that outward Things, such as *Wisdom* and *Learning*, and worldly Advantages, move God to set his Love upon any, *even so Father*, for so it seemed Good in thy Sight; yea his Love lights ordinarily upon the most stubborn and rebellious Sinners in the World, more than upon the most civil and moral Persons, that have led a better Life than the Generality of their Neighbours, who have had more of the Righteousness of the Law than other People, who have been better natured in respect of their pleasant natural Disposition than others, and who have had a good liberal Education, so as to be train'd up, not only in manifold Arts and Sciences but in manifold religious Duties from their Childhood. Grace many Times passes by such Persons as these, and lights upon more knobby rugged Persons. The young Man in the Gospel may be put to say, *All these things have I done from my Youth up*, and yet go away from Christ, when a bloody *Manasses*, and persecuting *Paul* are received into Favour and Mercy. In a Word, whomsoever he makes the Object of his manifested Love in Time, they are Persons unworthy of his Love, they are full of Enmity against him, and bent to backsliding from him, and wofully averse from returning to him, that God should love Sinners, and great Sinners. O! what preventing Love is it.

2. *The Time of his Love when he prevents them*, does also illustrate this. Many Times he makes his Grace to light upon them, not when they are in their best Frame or Mood, but behold a *Paul* going to *Damascus*, with the Knife in his Hand, ready to cut the Throats of the Saints, Grace outruns him, grips him, lays hold upon him, and the Love of a God in Christ overcomes him, he is made Christ's Prisoner, vanquish'd and brought to Subjection. I do not say, that it always holds, that a Body gets the Revelation of Grace, when going on in Sin, but the first Efflux of Grace towards them is many Times when in a very bad Case; the Lord arrests them many Times when

when they have been about some wicked act of Sin, the Lord will fall in at such a Time upon their Conscience, fill them with Terror, and humble them under his mighty Hand, and never leave them till he hath quickened them and made them live, *when thou wast in thy Blood, I said unto thee live.* But what need we say more anent the Time of his Love, to show the preventing Nature of it, than what God himself says, *Rom. ix. 11. Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, the Children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the Purpose of God, according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that called.* Before the Man was born, or had done either good or evil, behold he is an Object of Divine Love, *Jacob have I loved.* 3. *The Dawning of his Love upon them*, whereby he prevents them, may further illustrate this, *That he first loved us.* By this *Dawning* of his Love, I understand not only the Love and Grace that is objectively displayed in the Glorious Gospel, but especially the first glimmering of the subjective Light, or the Dawning of the Day of Power, wherein the Person is made willing when the Gospel comes, *Not in Word only, but in Power*: when he girds his Sword upon his Thigh, even his Glory and his Majesty, as that Word may be read, *Psal. xlv. 3.* For the Display of the Glory of his Grace and love is the Sword whereby he subdues and conquers his Enemies: And till this *will conquering Day of Power* take place, what is in the Will but Impotence and Insufficiency *to think any Thing as of our selves*, and not only Impotency but Aversion from every Thing that is Good, and not only Aversion but Opposition and Contrariety to the holy Nature and Will of God, *The Carnal Mind is Enmity against God, &c.* This *Dawning* then of the Day of the Power to make them willing, must take Place before there can be any gracious Motion in the Soul towards God, for all the legal Conviction and Humiliation that goes before this, works only from a Principle of *Self-love* and *Self-preservation*, till this great Master-faculty of the



Soul, the *Will* being conquered, carry the rest of the Head of  
 Faculties of the Soul towards God. 4. *The Fruits* themselves of  
 and *Effects* of his Love in them, wherein he prevents for us  
 them, and here I'll tell you some of these Things, Life of  
 that his Love prevents, in regard that they are Life in  
*Fruits* of his Love. And, 1. His Love prevents Is not  
 our *Holiness*, for that is a Fruit of his Love. Who  
 hope you know that Sanctification and Holiness is after  
 a Work of God's free Grace, and so an Effect Christ  
 of his free Love, and yet I fear you bewray nation  
 your Ignorance of the Gospel in thinking; O of Rel  
*must I not be holy before ever God love me*, must have  
 not a Man be somewhat holy, and therefore God Love  
 will love him, and give him more? O great Ig- (3.) H  
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*thou hast received?* Is not the very first beginning not ro  
 of Holiness from God? Is it not he that infuses upon  
 Habit of Grace, and takes away the Heart of our c  
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 Love prevents our habitual *Holiness*, and also our in or  
 actual *Holiness*, and all our good Works. Surely Wo's  
 you may know this, for you have learned to say, darker  
 that as it is by his free Grace, that *we are renew* in thi  
*ed in the whole Man, after the Image of God*, so it much  
 is by the same free Grace that we are enabled more other  
*and more to die to Sin, and live unto Righteousness* Christ  
 If any good Work, truly good, be wrought by you, Right  
 it not the Fruit of God's creating Power? For *we are* as w  
*his Work-manship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good* deal o  
*Works.* (2.) His Love prevents our *Faith*, for that Reper  
 is a Fruit of his Love. You'll say, it is true, he that  
 must make us holy, but must we not come to him is ind  
 for it? Is it not upon Condition that we believe is no  
 that he loves us and saves us? My dear Friends true,  
 whence is it that we get Faith? If ever we have pect F  
 any true Faith, is it upon the Account of foreseen Sancti  
 Faith that God loves any Man? That is rank Ar Pardo  
 minianism. Is it because we had Faith before? O Sanct  
 Does Faith come out of our own Shop? Or, is i think  
 spun out of our own Bowels, and forged upon ou Rome  
 own Anvil? Can we bring Faith out of our own and i



rest of the Head or Heart? Can *dry Bones* live, or raise themselves out of the Grave? Nay, it is as impossible for us to believe, and raise our selves up to the Life of *Faith*, as it is for a Carcase of Clay to put Life in itself; nay, is not *Faith* the *Gift of God*? Is not Christ the Author and Finisher of *Faith*? Who says, *When I am lifted up, I'll draw all Men after me*. It requires the same Power that raised Christ from the Dead. O then! Let not your Imagination in this Matter cross the very first Principles of Religion, so as to think that your *Faith*, if you have any, is the Cause of *God's Love*, while his Love is the Cause of your *Faith*; he first loved us.

(3.) His Love prevents our *Repentance*, for that is a *Fruit of his Love*; Why say you, must we not repent and reform, before God set his Love upon us? And ought we not by the Exercise of our common Gifts and Abilities that God hath given us, work up ourselves to something of this, in order to our obtaining the Favour of God? Wo's me for such Ignorance, and such a Gospel-darkening Religion, as is like to come in Fashion in this Generation. O! is not *Repentance* as much a *Gift of God*, and Fruit of his Love, as any other Graces and Fruits of the Spirit, *Acts v 31. Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour by the Right-hand of God, to give Repentance to Israel, as well as Remission of Sin*. We have a great deal of Noise made about the Necessity of Gospel-Repentance before, and in order to Justification, and that even as a Condition and Qualification; here is indeed a *new Scheme* of Divinity, of which there is no Foundation in our *Standards* of Doctrine. It is true, *Repentance* is so necessary, that none can expect Pardon without it; and so say I, Holiness and Sanctification is so necessary, that none can expect Pardon without it: But is therefore Holiness and Sanctification necessary in order to Justification? I think it is hard to maintain this without running to *Rome*, and making Sanctification before Justification, and in order to it; for if actual Gospel-Repentance

be not a Part of Sanctification, I know not what it is, yea, as described in our Catechism, it comprehends the whole of Sanctification. But to return, Why, may one say, may we not Repent of our Sins in some Measure, and reform our Lives, and humble ourselves and mourn? At least, can we not shed a Tear? Can we not leave off our Tippling, and quit our Lusts, and think upon Death, Judgment and Eternity, so as by the Meditation of these we shall get ourselves wrought up to a strong and strange Mortification to all Things in the World, yea, become as eminent in this as any Saint in all the Country, for all their Boasting? Well, much Good may your *Repentance* do you, and would to God that you were doing more than you do. But I would have you suspect your *Repentance*, yea, I tell you assuredly, that even by the utmost use of the highest common Gifts and Graces, you cannot repent; and when you have brought yourself by these Means to the greatest Measure of legal *Repentance*, yet there is no Promise in all the Bible to that Repentance; *For all the Promises are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus*, and till you get into Christ by a *Faith of his* Operation, your common legal Repentance is a sinful Repentance: *For whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, and so it is a God-displeasing Repentance; *For without Faith it is impossible to please God*. In a Word your Repentance, which you so much magnify in your Heart, for I suppose you are not so destitute of Wit, as to speak thus before the World. This Repentance, I say, is so far from disposing you for Christ, that it tends effectually to make you oppose Christ; why, you find Heart-melting and Mourning, Tears and Sorrows, great Flashes and Land-Floods of Affection, and then you think all is right; You see no more Need of Christ, and come short of him, instead of being drawn into him. "A Man in this Case, as "one fitly expresses it, is like one that comes to "court a Lady. But having got a Sight of the "Hand-Maid, he falls in Love with her, courts her, "and

" and marries her, who yet was but the Person  
 " that should have led him to the Lady he was  
 " proposing to match with ; So here Christ is the  
 " Match, the Law and the Duties thereof are the  
 " Hand-Maid ; well, thou falls to Duties, sorrowing  
 " for Sin, and the like, you have fallen in Love with  
 " that, and seek no further." Why, you'll say by  
 this Means you would have no preparatory Work at  
 all. It seems by this Doctrine, say, you, a Man  
 must come to Christ just at the first Leap, recking out  
 of his Sins, before ever his Life be reformed ; Nay,  
 Sirs, I must tell you in the Lord's Name, that the  
 Design of a right preparatory Work is to ding you  
 out of your feigned Repentance and Reformation,  
 and out of your false Hopes and Confidence, and  
 to sweep away your Refuge of Lies ; and if ever  
 God prepare you for Christ, he will bring you to say,  
 " O ! I cannot repent, I cannot reform, I cannot  
 " mourn ; and give me a World I cannot command  
 " a hearty Sigh, or a Sob for Sin, I can do nothing,  
 " I'm hard like a Stone, and black like a Devil, and  
 " unless Christ help, I'm utterly and eternally un-  
 " done." And this tends to give the Soul a great  
 Demonstration of the Freedom of his Love, that it  
 prevents our Repentance ; *He first loved us.* (4.)  
 His Love prevents our *Prayers*, for that is also a  
 Fruit of his Love. You'll say, though we cannot  
 win to be Holy, and cannot believe and repent,  
 yet we must *Pray*, and seek, or else we cannot get  
 his Favour and *Love*. Wo's me that People should  
 have such dark and dangerous Notions of the Me-  
 thod of Salvation. *Pray*, whence comes your *Pray-*  
*ers*, if they be worth the Name of *Prayers*, do they  
 not come from Heaven, and from the Spirit of  
 Grace and Supplication ? If you have any Desires  
 that are worth the Naming, they come from above ;  
 and if they come wholly out of your Heart or Head,  
 they are not worth ; yea, whatever Desire you have  
 out of Christ, and whatever Prayer is not put up  
 on this Altar, *the Name of Jesus Christ*, and by the  
 Help of the Spirit of Christ, there is no Promise made

to it ; for however several Promises are made to God's Ordinances and Institutions, which oblige you to be about his Hand in the Use of the Means, yet no Promise is made to your Performance out of Christ. Expect then no Favour for, or upon the Account of your Duties ; for if that be your Way of doing, you need to pray that God may ding you out of your *Prayers*. Let none think now that I am discouraging any from the use of Means, and the Performance of Duties ; nay, I take Witness that in God's Name I call you to the Use thereof, and declare you're obliged thereto by the Command and Authority of *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*. But in the same Name I call you to the right Use of the Means, the Gospel-use of Means, for that legal Notion of Praying and Seeking, that I find for ordinary among People, as if their Seeking would prevent God's Love, and procure his Favour, and so make Christ of their *Prayers*, yea more than a Christ : For, as I said before, the Love of God in itself cannot be procured, Christ himself did not procure it ; for God's Love prevented Christ's Mission, and sent him to procure all that he did procure and purchase ; and therefore, if you think your *Prayers* will purchase God's Love, you make more than a Christ of your *Prayers*, and so they are offensive to God, dishonouring to Christ, and prejudicial to your own Souls. The Saints themselves know that it is not by their Duties that they obtain his Love : But in Duty sometimes they get a Sense of his Love. Why, may some say, we need pray none at all, if we get no good by our *Prayers*. Really Man these *Prayers* of yours which you make your Righteousness, and for which you expect to be loved, and justified, and saved, they are the most abominable to God, and unprofitable to you in the World. *To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices*, Isa. i. 11. *Therefore bring no more vain Oblations, your Incense is Abomination to him, he cannot away with it, it is Iniquity, even your solemn Meeting*, Isa. i. 13. See Isa. lxvi. 3. Therefore you have

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have Need to pray that God would learn you the  
 Mystery of *Prayer*, for you'll never find it a pleasant,  
 comfortable and profitable Exercise, while you set it  
 before his *Love* as a Cause of it ; whereas it follows  
 after his *Love*, as a Fruit of it. Hence all that ever  
 prayed to Purpose, or wrestled with him for the  
 Blessing, have found that they could not Pray, more  
 than they could move the Earth from its Center,  
 until his Grace prevented their *Prayers*, and they  
 can all set their Seal to that Word, Isa. lxxv. 1. *I*  
*am found of them that sought me not* : None ever  
 sought him aright, till free Grace sought them out,  
 and found them out in some Respect. *Quest.* But is  
 it not said, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *For these Things will I*  
*be enquired of by the House of Israel ?* Why be-  
 twixt Gracious seeking and finding there is a certain  
 Connexion : For gracious and spiritual seeking  
 presupposes Grace to seek, and that his *Love* hath  
 already prevented our *Prayers*, and when he gives  
 Grace to seek, to be sure he will give more and more,  
 not for our seeking, but for his Promise sake in Christ  
 Jesus, and upon his Account. But if we understand  
 that Word as an Encouragement to all, whether  
 gracious or graceless Persons, *For this will I be en-*  
*quired of by the House of Israel*, then the Meaning is  
 not, *I'll give you none of these Things*, to wit, *The*  
*New Heart, the New Spirit*, there promised, and  
 the Spirit to be put within you ; I say, the Meaning  
 is not, *I'll give you none of these Things*, but for  
 the Sake of your *Prayers*, and till your *Prayers* pro-  
 duce them ; Nay, that Exposition would be cross to  
 the very Context, which says, *Not for your Sake do I*  
*this, O House of Israel, be it known to you, and be*  
*ashamed and confounded for your own Ways* ; You  
 may be ashamed of your *Prayers* and Duties, as well  
 as your Sins and Iniquities, and therefore it is not  
 for the Sake of your *Persons* or *Prayers* either, be it  
 known unto you, and therefore the Meaning of the  
 Word is, That as all *Israel* hath a Right of Access  
 to these Promises, and all Poor Sinners that hear  
 tell of them, may come to a Throne of Grace, and  
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plead for the Accomplishment of them to themselves in a way of free Grace, so in the diligent use of all these Means and Ordinances of my Appointment, they shall find that I will yield my self exorable, and easy to be intreated, and so it is an encouragement to Prayer, in expectation that God will confer the promised Blessings, and not that our *Prayers* will obtain them ; and therefore the more that a Man turns such a Scripture to a Covenant of Works, as if he were upon Terms with God, that upon Condition that he pray, and seek, God will give him the promised Blessings. The more he does so, I say, the further is he from all these Blessings ; whereas the less Hope and Expectation that a poor Soul hath from his *Prayers*, he will ay find, that he will come the more Speed. In a Word, the *Prayer* you speak of Man, is either a natural or spiritual *Prayer* ; if it be a natural *Prayer*, then as the natural Man is bound to pray, and yet hath nothing to expect but of sovereign free Grace, so there is no connexion betwixt his *Prayer* and the Promise, unless we turn rank *Arminians*. If it be a spiritual *Prayer*, then to be sure, the Promise hath prevented his *Prayer* ; for to say that none of these Promises are given till once a Man pray in the Spirit for them, is cross to the whole current of Scripture, and spiritual Reason, for how can a Man pray in the Spirit till that Promise be accomplished in some measure upon him, *I will put my Spirit within you*. Thus his Love prevents our *Prayers*, it prevents our Desires and Endeavours, *he first loved us*. And so much shall suffice for the first general Head.

The 2d. Thing proposed was, to speak of Believers Love to God and Christ, *we love him* ; this is but a small Stream that flows from, and runs again to the Ocean of his Love. We may take up this Love of the Saints towards God in the following Considerations:

1. We may consider this Love in Nature. It is not a Spark of natural Kindling, it is not from natural Reason or common Grace, no, it is from the saving Operation of the Holy Ghost, circumcising the Heart to love God ; *The Fruits of the Spirit are*

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*Faith, Love, and the rest of the Graces*: It is altogether super-natural, for *the natural Mind is Enmity against God*, we naturally hate God; Sirs, tho' the worst in the World will say they do not hate God, yet they really do it, and their Hatred appears in their Aversion from him and his Ways, their Opposition to his Commands and Counsels, their Contempt of his Promises, and Neglect of his Salvation, and his Christ, for they will not come to him that they might have Life. It is God's prerogative to turn the Heart *from Enmity to Love, from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*: No man can turn himself more than the *Ethiopian can change his Skin*, &c. Jer. xiii. 23. Men by their Improvement of their natural Faculties, and by common Grace, which most part of Men have something of, come to a Sermon, and go to their Knees, carry with somewhat of Morality and Modesty, but they cannot win to command themselves to love God: Nay, Duty is a Burden, the Word is a Weariness to them, they are mad upon Idols, and serve divers Lusts, they make the *Lord to serve with their Sin*, and their Duties to serve as a Covering to their Lusts, and make use of Duty for this, that they may be looked upon as good Men, and not Atheists: But let them do their best, they cannot expel that cursed Habit of Enmity, nor introduce the contrary Habit of Love; till the Power of God come along discovering the Beauty and Glory of Christ, and transforming the Soul after the same Image, for this Love imports a saving Knowledge of this glorious Object beloved, a high Esteem of the Object thus known, a hearty Choice of him whom we thus esteem, and a sweet Recumbency in this Choice. The Understanding is made to see the Judgment to esteem, the Will to chuse, and the Soul to acquiesce in him. But these Things I cannot enlarge upon.

2. We may consider this Love in the kinds of it: And here I would speak only of two kinds in general; namely, a more common, and a more special Love. 1. There is a more common Love, which even

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even Hypocrites may have, and may have it as a Fruit of God's Spirit in his common Operation, while yet they are not renewed in the whole Man. As they may have a temporary Faith, so they may have a Love proportioned to this. The Seed of the Word falls into the Heart, as into stony Ground, and it quickly springs up in some flashes Affection and fair flourishes of a Profession, so as they may seem to themselves and others to be among the best of Christians, while yet it is not any special Work of God's Spirit, but a common Gift and Grace. The Lord designs to tame and civilize some, as well as to save and convert others. Now this Love, however great and vehement it may be in Appearance, yet it is but a Sand-flood; at the best it hath not a Spring, it is nourished as a Pool of Water, not as a Well of Water; the Water which the Lord gives to his People, it is in them, *as a Well of Water, springing up to everlasting Life*, John iv. 14. But the Hypocrite's Love is a *returning to the Lord*, but not with the *whole Heart*. It is a Love, as described in the *Jews*, *They served the Lord, and they served Ashtaroth*; to pacify their Consciencēs they will serve the Lord: But to satisfy their Affections they will serve their Lusts; they never sell their *All* for the Pearl of great Price, they never rest upon him as their present, only, and greatest Good, nor find full Satisfaction in him. They never come to that with it, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c.*? There is something beside Christ that they desire, they have some liking to him when he smiles on them in his Providences, when they get ease to their Consciencēs, and by their false Hopes of Heaven, apprehend Matters to be well enough with them. But when the Lord begins to frown, and the Course of his Providence is turned, then their Love is turned into Hatred, and *the Hatred wherewith they hate him, is greater than the Love wherewith they loved him*. As *Job's* Hearers rejoyce in his Light for a Season, and but for a Season, and Christ's Hearers cry this Day *Hosanna*, and the next Day crucify him;

him ; and as many People followed Christ for the Loaves, because he fed them, so many still follow Christ, some for outward Things, and because of his general merciful Dispensations, yea some for inward Things : O ! say they, Ordinances are pleasant, it is a sweet Thing to get a Tear at a Sermon, and to be ravish'd with something of the Glory of Heaven, and the Privileges of the Saints ; no doubt the Joy with which the stony Ground Hearers received the Word, had its Sweetness and Pleasure, and thereupon their Hearts are aloft, and they think they love Christ above all Things ; but yet their Root is Rottenness, they never truly come to Christ, to get rest to their Hearts and Consciences from the Filth and Guilt of Sin. But 2. There is a *special Love*, whereby the whole Soul is carried out towards the Lord, as its chief, present and only good, and whereby the Soul sees nothing in Heaven or Earth desirable in comparison of him, and that acts towards a present Christ in rejoicing in him, and towards an absent Christ, by lamenting after him ; it acts cleaving to him, when they have the greatest Temptations to go away, and it kyths most when Christ threatens to depart, and it cleaves most to him, when many are departing from him, *To whom shall we go, thou hast the Words of eternal Life.* It counts *all but Loss and Dung for him* ; Christ gets the Throne of their Hearts, the Cream of their Affections, the very Soul of their Souls, their most vehement Love ; whatever other Things they love, it is but in a subordination to him ; whatever other Things they rejoice in, he is their chief Joy, *I'll go to the Altar of God, to God my exceeding Joy*, Psalm xliii. 4. Their Joy in him exceeds the Joy that they have in any Thing else in a World.

3. We may consider this Love in the *Degrees* of it. I would not be for the breaking a *bruised Reed*, or *quenching a smoking Flax* ; my Heart's Desire is, that all that love Christ, even in the weakest Degree, if it be a special Love, may go away rejoicing in him ; therefore I tell you of these four Degrees of this Love. 1. There is a Love of *Desire* after Christ,



Christ, that is not yet arrived at a full Complacency in him. *The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name*, says the Church. A poor Thing may have a rooted Desire after Christ, that is not yet come the length of a rooted Delight in him, because thro' Unbelief they question their special Interest in him; but *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled*. If a gracious Desire after Christ be rooted in the Soul, there is true Love. Yea further, this Desire hath several Degrees also, sometimes the Desire is like a *Smoking Flax*, hardly can one discern the Spunk of red Fire, only they see Smoke as a Sign of Fire, a *Smoking Flax*. This Desire may be strangely choaked, sometimes thro' the prevalence of Unbelief: Even the Children of God that have sound and saving Desires, may become so heartless, as that they have no boldness to come to the Lord, and express their Desires, all they can say is, that there is something about their Hearts-roots of an earnest Wish, that the Lord would come to them, when they cannot come to him; all they can say is, *O, when will he come to me! O, when will he give me a Visit! O, there is none in the World needs a Visit so much as I!* Sometimes their Desires are more vivid and lively, more bright and shining, and break forth in ardent Prayers and Pantings of Soul after him. *As the Hart pants after the Water-brooks, so pants my Soul after thee, O God! My Soul thirsts for God, for the living God. With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, and with my Spirit within me, will I seek thee early.* Sometimes again their Desires become so strong, as that the Person is made to put on a Resolution, as *David* did; *I'll neither give Sleep to mine Eyes, nor Slumber to mine Eye lids, till I find out a Place for the Lord, an Habitation for the Mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephrata, we found it in the Fields of the Wood*, *Psal. cxxxii. 4, 5, 6.* Their Desire may be such as to make them restless, till they get their Hearts made a fit Habitation for him, they may be such as to carry their Souls above all temporary



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Enjoyments, and make them mount up on Wings  
 as Eagles, and to look down upon all time Enjoyments  
 and sublunary Comforts, as altogether contemptible.  
 But then, 2. As there is a Love of Desire, so of De-  
 light and Complacency, whereby they take up their  
 Rest and Satisfaction in him, saying, *Tho' the Fig-tree  
 should not blossom, &c.* Indeed they that have found  
 saving Desires after the Lord, are unsatisfied till their  
 Desire be turned to Delight, and till they win at this,  
*Whom having not seen we love, in whom tho' now we  
 see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with Joy un-  
 speakable and full of Glory.* When the Lord mani-  
 fests himself to them, as reconciled in Christ, when he  
 manifests his Love to their Souls, and opens the  
 Flood gates of his Spirit's Influences, O then they  
 cannot but delight in him, and *be satisfied as with  
 Marrow and Fatness*; for then they have a Feast of  
*fat Things, and of Wines on the Lees, &c.* O Sensua-  
 lists, that never had a more pleasant Hour all your  
 Days, than when you sat down to a hearty Meal  
 of Meat or Drink, you're but a miserable Creature.  
*There is Meat to eat that you know not of, and Joy  
 that you intermeddle not with.* O the Joy and Tri-  
 umph that there is in the Enjoyment of a God in Christ,  
*Thanks be to God which always causes us to triumph  
 in Christ,* always causes to triumph. It is true the  
 Souls of Believers may sometimes wander from the  
 Lord, even after they have win at this Enjoyment,  
 and never more readily than on the back of a sweet  
 Communion; their Desires may wander after other  
 Things, they may fall asleep, they are not yet per-  
 fect, nor delivered from a Body of Death, and there-  
 fore after that they may come under Doubts, and  
 great Damps, and these may bring them very low,  
 and may much alienate their Hearts from the Lord;  
 yea, but they are as the Needle in the Compass, that  
 can never rest or settle till it win to the right Point.  
 They can never rest till they win into his Bosom a-  
 gain; they find their Case a Wilderness Case, where-  
 in they are wandering from Mountain to Hill, and  
 therefore they say, *Return to thy Rest, O my Soul;*  
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they are made again to return to him, and take more Delight in him than ever, and by delighting in him get an Earnest-penny of Heaven. 3. There is a Love of *Benevolence* and Good-will towards Christ, and his Interest in the World, that all his Concerns in the World may go right, and *that no Weapon formed against Zion may Prosper.* By this Love all these Things, whereby God makes himself known, his Word, his Ordinances, his People, his Precepts, his Truths, are precious, And to this we may join, 4. The Love of *Beneficence*, whereby they do all they can for the Honour of Christ, the Good of his Church, the Credit of his Truths, and for bearing down every Interest opposite to his. But these Things may perhaps fall under another Head.

4. We may consider this Love in the *Dimensions* of it; as God's Love towards his People hath *Height, and Depth, and Length, and Breadth*, so there is something like Dimensions of that sort in their Love to him. 1. Their Love is a *high* Love, it hath a Height, it is a transcendent Love; they love him *above all Things*, they love him *more than Father or Mother, Sister or Brother, Profit or Pleasure, Credit or Pre-ferment, yea, doubtless they count all Things but Loss, &c.* The Language of their Soul is, *None but Christ*; in all Things he hath the Preheminence. 2. Their Love hath *Depth*, for it is rooted in the Heart, and does not float in the Fancy. The Love of many is but like a Thaw, that will sometime be on the Face of the Ground, by the Heat of the Sun, while there is a hard Frost below in the Earth; so their Love is but superficial, upon the Surface of the Soul, there is some Thaw, but the Heart is hard, true Love hath a deep Root. 3. Their Love hath a *Breadth*, they not only love his Mercy and Grace, but his Faithfulness, Justice and Holiness; they love not only his Covenant Promises, but his kindly Threatnings, not only his favourable Providences, but also his fatherly Chastisements; they love every Thing that hath any Thing of God in it, his People because they are his Image, his Ordinances because they are his Galleries; they

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they love the Place where his Honour dwells, and every Thing that hath a Divine Stamp and Super-  
 scription. 4. Their Love hath a Length in it, as well as a Height, and Depth, and Breadth. It is not like the Hope of the Hypocrite *that perisheth*. Their Hope and Love, who are Hypocrites, is built upon an airy Fancy and empty Imagination, it is built upon Sand, and so it falls to the Ground, but the Believer's Love is built upon the Faith of the Promise, and the Faith of the Love of God; it is built upon the Rock of Ages, and so the Building stands. Some will have a Love to a Thing To-day, and quit it To-morrow, but Love to Christ will never go quite out. It is true their Love is not always exercised, or always equal in its exercise, for sometimes it is like a Coal below the Ashes, yet all the Power of Hell cannot quench it, *for many Waters cannot quench Love*; it may be overtop'd with the Weeds of Corruption, and out of view, *for the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, and the Flesh may be strong, and the Spirit or Grace weak, but still the Root remains, and shall grow up to Perfection,

5. We may consider this Love in the Properties of it. Some of them have been touched in the preceding Heads, therefore in short, 1. True Love to God in Christ is a *free and voluntary* Love. Some People force themselves up, as it were, to a liking of Christ, by using manifold Arguments, and after all, it is imaginary and mercenary Love; they are not under the Constraint of Gospel Grace, but the Constraint of legal Hope, expecting some Reward for their Love and Service: But here the Person loves the Lord for himself, and serves him without legal Compulsion or Coaction, or by legal Fears of Hell, or legal Hope of Heaven. As he loves them freely in Opposition to Merit, so they love him freely in Opposition to legal Compulsion. 2. True Love is a *sincere* Love; *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity*; It is a loving the Lord *with all the Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength*, it is hearty, and hath its Abode in the inner Chambers of

the Heart. It does not ly in the Tongue or Lip, or the outward Profession only, but in the Heart and Affection, and Soul of Man. True Love is an *ardent* Love; it is compared to Fire that hath a most vehement Flame: It is like Fire for Light, it is the Discovery of Christ that makes the Soul to love him, and it makes the Man's *Light to shine before Men*, so as his heavenly Father is glorified: It is like Fire for Heat, it heats the Breast, and warms the Affections, and flames towards Christ when he is seen: It is like the Fire for its consuming Quality, it consumes Lusts and Corruptions; *Many Waters cannot quench it*, no Water of Sin, of Affliction, of Desertion, or Temptation. 4. True Love is *active* Love; it makes the Soul to act for God, and for Christ, saying, O what shall I do for him? *What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits?* It constrains to Services and Sufferings for Christ. 5. True Love is an *uniting* Love, it carries out the Soul towards Union and Communion with God in Christ, he affects Communion with him in the Thoughts and Meditations: *My Meditation of him shall be sweet*; Communion with him in his Ordinances, Communion with him in his Grace, and Communion with him in Glory. 6. True Love is a *solicitous* and *careful* Love; it is careful to avoid whatever is offending to God, careful to provide whatever is pleasing to him, careful and solicitous lest it should lose his Company, careful and solicitous to recover a Sight of him when he absents himself. 7. True Love is a *bold* and *venturing* Love, it will adventure upon Reproaches, Persecutions, Dangers, Difficulties, yea and Death it self, for the Sake of the Lord Jesus. When there are the greatest Difficulties, true Love will cleave most to Christ; when there is a general Apostacy, true Love will appear most for Christ, as the two Witnesses, *Rev. xi.* When Men make Breaches upon the Truths of God, the true Lover of Christ will cast himself into the Breach, as *Pergamus* did, *Rev. ii. 13.* In a Word, when Love cannot stand in the Breach it will mourn for the Dis-

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Dishonour done to Christ, and weep in secret Places for it; all these proceed from the invincible Valour of Love. 8. True Love is a *persevering Love*: When Faith and Hope, in some respect, will carry us no further than the Grave, love will go over the Border of Time, and remain in Heaven for ever. 9. True love is a *conjugal* love, a Marriage love; and as conjugal Love is a *loyal* love, so is true love to Christ; it calls Jesus LORD and KING. *He is thy Lord and worship thou him*, Psal. xvi. 11. As conjugal love is a *chaste* love, so true love to Christ, cannot endure a Rival; it allows no Mate, no Lust, no *Delilah* to come in Christ's Room without the utmost Abhorrence. As conjugal Love is a *reverential* Love, so true love to Christ carries towards him with holy Fear and Reverence, and filial Regard: And as a conjugal Love is a *fruitful* a *fruit-bearing* Love, so true Love to Christ is a Love that bears Fruit to him; *Ye are dead to the Law by the Body of Christ, and married to another, even to Christ, that ye might bring forth Fruit unto God*. Again, 10. True Love is an *assimulating* Love, it changes the Person in whom it is, into the Image of the glorious and beloved Object, and makes him desire above all Things to be like unto Christ, saying, O, to be holy, O, to be free of Sin, O, to be full of God, O, to be conformed to the Image of Christ; yea the more Love, the more Likeness. 11. In a Word, sometimes it is an *extatical* Love, as if the Man were beside himself, and out of himself: Hence that Proverb, *Amantes Amentes*, like that of the Apostle, *If we be beside our selves it is to God*, 2 Cor. v. 13. It carries the Soul out of it self, saying with the Church, *The Voice of my Beloved, behold he comes*: It is an abrupt kind of Speech, like that of a Person transported, ravish'd, and in a Rapture. *The Voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh*; sometimes there is a waft of Glory, a bright glance of the Sun of Righteousness.

6. We may consider this Love in the Effect of it. (1.) This Love vents it self in *Prayer* and *Supplication*.

tion. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. (2.) It vents it self in Praise and Commendation: My Beloved is white and ruddy, the Chief among Ten Thousand. (3.) It vents it self in Wonder and Admiration: Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God. (4.) It vents it self in Obedience and Observation of his Law: If you love me, keep my Commandments. (5.) It vents it self in Hatred of Sin, and of every false Way: Ye that love the Lord hate Evil. (6.) It vents it self in loving every Thing that belongs to God. And this might lead me to show how.

7. We may consider this Love in the Object of it, and in the Extent of its Object. Why the true Lover of Christ he loves a whole Christ. (1.) He loves him in his Person, as he is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person. (2.) He loves him in his Nature, as he is God-Man, Immanuel, God with us. (3.) He loves him in his Offices, as he is a Prophet to take away his Darkness, a Priest to take away his Guilt, and a King to take away his Sin, and to subdue his Lusts. (4.) He loves him in his Relations, as he stands related to God, being his Eternal Son, as he stands related to the Covenant, being the Mediator, Witness, Surety and Testator, and All of it; and as he stands related to his Church, being their Head and Husband, and all Relations to them. You see what a large Field I might here go through. (5.) He loves him in his Righteousness, both active and passive, as having fulfilled the Law, and satisfied the Justice of God in our Room. (6.) He loves him in his Merit and Purchase; he loves him in his Spirit and Grace; he loves him in his Commands, Promises and Comforts; he loves him in his Work and Wages; he loves him in his Ministers and People; he loves him in his Gospel and Ordinances; he loves him in his Crown, Honour and Glory; he loves him in

in his Cross, his Reproach and Suffering ; he loves him in every Thing about him, and especially in himself, as being altogether lovely. And this leads to another Consideration.

8. We may consider this Love in the *Grounds* of it. Indeed 'tis a God in Christ they love ; more particularly, if you ask what are the *Grounds* of the Saints Love to Christ : Why, 1. Their Love to him is grounded upon his Worth, Beauty and Excellency ; the Soul loves him, because of his own amiable Excellency. When the Soul gets a view of Christ's own Beauty, and of the Glory of God in him, his Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Grace, Mercy and other Properties, his Heart is ravish'd with Love within him. O the Thoughts of his Worth, and his Fulness of Grace and Good-will is overcoming, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee*, Song i. 3. (2.) Their Love to him is grounded upon his Undertaking for them, and accomplishing that Undertaking : They love him, because of what he did undertake from Eternity, and perform in Time, *who loved me, and give himself for me* : They love him, because he put himself in their Nature for their good : They love him, because he hath put his Name in their Debt, Bonds and Bills : They love him, because he put their Names in his last Will, and in the Book of Life : They love him, because he put his Spirit, his Nature, and his Father's Image into them. (3.) Their Love to him is grounded upon his Father's Love to him, and Satisfaction in him : *The Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness Sake, saying, This is my beloved Son, in who I am well pleased*. And O, but Christ be deservedly the Object of the Saints Love, because he is the Object of the Father's Love, who loves him, both as he is his Son, and as he is our Surety ; and therefore as the Sum of all. (4.) Their Love to him is grounded upon his Love to them ; *We loved him, because he first loved us*. This leads me to

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The 3<sup>d</sup>. general Head. The Influence that his Love hath upon theirs as the Cause of it. And here I would, 1. Clear and demonstrate it, that his loving us is the Cause of our loving him. 2. Enquire what Influence his Love hath upon ours. As to the first of these. To clear this Point, we would offer the following Considerations. 1<sup>st</sup>. Consideration is, That a natural Man that looks upon God, can never have a Heart-love to him, whatever he pretends. 'Tis true, many fancy God loves them, and pretend they have a Love to him, like some in the Church of *Ephesus*, who said they *were Apostles, and were not, but were found Liars*; so many pretend they know God and love him, who yet in *Works deny him*, and by their Practice are found Liars, and the Vision of their Heads is like to end in utter Darkness: 'Tis true also, that all that have a Love to God, have not the full Assurance of God's Love to them. Some may live under his Frowns, who yet are in a state of Favour; there may be some true Love, where yet there is but little joyful Assurance; yet, I say, these who have no Faith at all of God's Love in Christ, but look upon God as an implacable Enemy, they can have no hearty Love to him; nay, Conscience of Guilt, and Fear of Wrath make them run away from God as an Enemy; the Spirit of slavish Fear, which all awakened Sinners are naturally possess of, 'till God shew them his Love and Favour in Christ, will rather harden Men in their Enmity, than melt them into Love. If there were nothing but the Terror of the Lord to be known, Conversion would be impossible. 2<sup>d</sup>. Consideration is, That the greater the Sense of God's Love in Christ is, the stronger will our Love to him be. Hence there are such different Degrees of Love to God among the Saints, and even in the same Saints or Believers at several Seasons, according as they have more or less of the comfortable Apprehension of the Love of God in Christ: For altho' the Love of God be not variable, yet our Views and Apprehensions of it are. Every Believer hath his dark and gloomy Days, as well as his bright and



and pleasant Days; and the less sensible Views he hath of God's Love and Favour, the more sensible Deadness in Duty, and Decay of Love to God takes place. When the Believer wants the Faith of God's Love, his Wings are clipt; but when his Heart is fraughted with a large measure of the Faith of God's Love, then he *mounis up on Wings as an Eagle*, then the Love of Christ *constrains him*, and his Heart is *enlarged to run the Way of God's Commandments*. 3d. Consideration, That the Love of God discovered breaks the Power of all these Things that hinder our Love to him. Is Self-love a Snare to keep us from the Love of God? Well, a Display of God's Love breaks the Power of Self-love. When *Job* got a Discovery of the Glory of God's Grace, then he abhors himself. When we know that God is pacified towards us, it makes us *loath and abhor our selves*, Ezek. xvi. 63. A Sinner is never so odious in his own Sight, as when he is persuaded of his being precious in God's Sight. Does the Flattery of the World allure Men from the Love of God? Well, but the Displays of God's Love make *the World to be crucified to us, and us to the World*: Christ's Love discovered dims all the seeming Glory of the World as the Sun darkens the lesser Lights, and as the Works of Nature spoil the Reputation of the Works of Art. Do the Frowns of the World scar us from the Love of God and his Way? Well, but the Display of God's Love to us is a noble Security against this Temptation; for little matter who be against us, *if God be for us, his loving Kindness is better than Life*; therefore tho' the Rage of Men should reach our Lives, yet what Comparison is betwixt the Breath of our Nostrils, and the Favour of an Eternal God? We do not love God in Christ, because we do not know him; but when his Love is displayed, then he is known in the Light of the Spirit, *as a Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ*, the Spirit comes as a Spirit of Light, and thus the Love of God is *shed abroad upon the Heart by the Holy Ghost*. 4. Consideration, When God displays his Love, he

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at the same Time transforms the Soul to whom he discovers himself, and makes it a new Creature. Now the new Nature is a grateful and loving Nature, depraved Nature may Reward Evil for Good, and Hatred for *Love*, but it is not so with the new Nature, it natively renders *Love* for *Love*; it is native to the Soul upon the Discovery of God's *Love*, his everlasting *Love*, to be constrained to his Service and Obedience. *If you love me keep my Commandments.* Now this *Love* that is the Product of God's *Love*, is virtually all Obedience: and therefore *Love* is said to be the fulfilling of the Law, and when *Love* takes place *his Commandments are not grievous*, but pleasant, yea when the *Love* of God is in the Heart, then the Law of God is in the Heart. But then, 2. To enquire more particularly, what Influence God's *Love* hath upon ours, *We love him because he first loved us*; our *Love* is just the Reflex of his, as the Sun shining upon a Glass. Why, How does his *Love* to us influence our *Love* to him? 1. It hath a Moral Influence in Point of Motive. 2. A Physical Influence in Point of Power. 1. It hath a Moral Influence in Point of Motive, and so it is the Moral Cause of our *Love*, the Incentive, the Argument. What will move us to love, if the Display of this infinite *Love* does it not? We cannot but love such a good God, who was first in the Act and Work of *Love*, that loved us when we were both unloving and unlovely, that loved us at such a Rate, as to seek and sollicite our *Love* at the Expence of his Son's, Blood, O amazing *Love*! Is there any Motive can be stronger to engage us to love him again; Shall not the *Love* of Christ constrain us to love him again? What in all the the World will indear a Soul to God, if the *Love* of God do it not? So much as we see of the *Love* of God so much we love him, and delight in him, and no more; every other Discovery of God without this, will but make the Soul to flee from him. If the Faith and Apprehension of his free *Love*, his antient *Love*, his antecedent *Love*, his preventing

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preventing Love, such as I have spoken of, be no Motive or Argument to influence us to love him, there is no Argument in the World will prevail.

2. It hath a Physical Influence in Point of Power, and so it is not only the Moral, but the Productive Cause. There is a Power in his Love that conquers, captivates, and overpowers the Man, so that he cannot but love; God's Love hath a generative Power, our Love is brought forth by his Love, *James i. 18. Of his own Will begat he us*, that is, of his own free Love and Good-will. Divine Love makes such an Impression, that it instamps Love upon the Soul. As his Love hath a generating Power, so it hath a creating Power, his Love infuses and creates Love in the Person Beloved, it works Good in the Man, that is the Object of it, his Power and Will are commensurate, what he will he works, and when the Time of Love or of manifesting Love comes, the Time of Power comes, *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*; his Love hath a constraining Power, *The Love of Christ constrains us*, and his Love hath a drawing Power, *I have loved thee with an everlasting Love; therefore with Loving-kindness will I draw thee*. He draws with the Cords of Love, and thereby draws the Heart towards him in Love; and hence never a Soul tasted the Sweetness of his everlasting Love, but at the same Time he felt the Power of it warming the Heart, and kindling a Fire of Love there. O how does his mighty Love break the Power of their mighty Enmity. Was ever pardoning Mercy and Love intimated, but the pardoned Soul behoved to read the Pardon with Tears of Joy and to Love much when much was forgiven? Can they chuse but love him, *Who are the called according to his Purpose of Love*, *Rom. viii. 28. We love him because he first loved us*.

The 4th General Head was the Application. Is it so, that God's Love to his People is the Source and Cause of their Love to him, then we may apply it for Information; And, 1. Hence see the Difference betwixt

betwixt God's Love to the Saints, and the Saints Love to God. It is true their *Loves* agree in several Things, his *love* to them is a *Love* of Complacency, he delights in them, and their *love* to him is a *love* of Complacency, they delight in him ; he loves them in Christ, and they love him in Christ, but yet vastly great is the Difference betwixt his love and theirs. 1. His love is *Eternal*, *their love is but of Yesterday's Date*. 2. His Love is the original Cause, *their Love is the native Effects of his*. 3. His love is an *antecedent Love*, it goes before theirs, as the Father loves the Child when the Child knows not the Father, much less loves him, yea they are by Nature Haters of God. And surely all mutual Love must begin on his Side, *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but God loved us* ; yea his Love not only goes before our Love, but before every Thing that is lovely in us, *Rom. v. 8. God commends his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us*. Sin imports all Unloveliness and Undesirableness that can be in a Creature, yet he loves ; but then our Love is a *Consequential Love*. 4. His Love being free and eternal is always *equal and unchangeable*, for the Strength of Israel is *not a Man that he should repent*, but our Love to him is *unequal and changeable, up and down* ; his Love is like the Sun always, the same in its Light, tho' a Cloud may sometimes interpose ; our Love is like the Moon, hath its waxings and weanings. His Love I say, is like the Sun, always the same in its Light ; it is true as the Sun is sometimes under a cloud, so the Fruits and Manifestations of God's Love may change ; now he shines, now he hides his Face, as it may be most for our Profit, but still his Love in itself is the same ; whatever Changes Affect the Saints, whether as to Sin or Suffering, yet God's Love to them is unchangeable. Why were it not Blasphemy to say, that God loves his People in their sinning, as well as in their strictest Obedience ? If so, who will care to serve him more ? *Answer*, The Love of God in itself is no more changeable than God himself

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himself ; and what then ? Loves he his People in their sinning, yea his People, not their sinning, Alters he his Love to them ? No, not his Love, but the Discoveries of his Love, he smites them, rebukes them, and fills them with a Sense of Indignation. But Woe would be to us if he changed in his Love. Nay, *he is God and changes not, &c.* These very Things which seem to be Demonstrations of the Change of his Affection, do as clearly proceed from Love to them, even his Chastisements, as any other Dispensations. Well, but will not this encourage to Sin ? “ O sure he never tasted, as one says, of the “ Love of God, that can seriously make this Ob-  
“ jection.” The Doctrine of Grace may be turned into Wantonness, but the Principle of Grace cannot. His Love, I say, being free, eternally, and preventing Love, is in itself always equal and unchangeable, but our Love to God is an ebbing and flowing Love. We are scarce a Day at a Stand. This Hour we may be at this, *Ibo’ all Men forsake thee, yet will not I!* And yet the next Hour at *this, I know not the Man* ; when ever was the Time that our Love was equal one Day to an End ?

2. Hence see the Difference betwixt Justification and Sanctification, and the Priority of Justification to Sanctification ; we may here notice the Difference betwixt the one and the other, many are the Differences betwixt them, but I confine me to what the Text imports. 1. In Justification God loves us, and shows his Love in Christ, in Sanctification we love God, and show our Love to him. For the comprehensive Sum of active Holiness is Love, *which is the fulfilling of the Law.* 2. In Justification we have the Favour of God, in Sanctification we have the Image of God, and the special Part of his Image is Love. 3. In Justification we are passive, as when God set his Love upon us ; but in Sanctification we are active, while his Love causes us to Act in loving him. 4. Justification is God’s Act of Love without us, in and through the Merit and Righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us, Sanctification is God’s Work

of Grace within us, by the Spirit of Christ *imparted* to us as a Spirit of Love, as well as of other Graces. 5. Justification is perfect, equal, and ay the same like the Love of God, the original Cause, and the Righteousness of Christ the meritorious Cause of it, but Sanctification is imperfect, unequal and changeable, for the Love of the Saints, as I said, is up and down. 6. Justification is the Cause, Sanctification the Effect, even as God's Love is the Cause of our Love. 7. Faith in Justification is an Instrument receiving Christ *as the Lord our Righteousness*, and apprehending the Love and Mercy of God in him; but Faith in Sanctification is an Agent, employing Christ *as the Lord our Strength*, to enable us to manifest our Love to him; and so we see the Priority of Divine Love and Favour, and Acceptation and Justification before any Work of ours; and so how any can maintain that actual Gospel Repentance (which must be a Work of ours, and a Piece of Sanctification at least) doth go before, and is necessary in order to Justification, let the Judicious consider, without receeding from our Standarts, and binding their Faith to the Belt of any fallible Creatures, Councils, or Acts. That legal Repentance or Humiliation and Conviction, and Sense of Sin, does go before Justification in order of Divine Operation is plain, and that habitual Sanctification, or Regeneration, and the infusing of all Grace into the Soul, is also previous, is not denied: But that Gospel Repentance, or any Part of actual Sanctification, is necessary in order to Justification and Pardon, I do not see how it is possible to maintain that without running into the *Roman* Camp, and fighting with *Papish* Weapons, and inverting the Order of our Text, making any Part of our Love to God necessary *first* in order to God's *loving us*. But sure God's Method of doing will stand in Spite of Hell and Earth: *We love him because he first loved us.*

3. Hence we may see, that as the Perswasion that is in the Nature of Faith lies in the Apprehension of

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of the Love and Mercy of God in Christ to a Man's self in particular ; so this Doctrine of Faith does not make void the Law, but establish and fulfill it, if we consider Love as *the fulfilling of the Law*, for the language of this Text when read in the singular Number is, *I love him because he first loved me* ; he first loved me, there is Faith's Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ. It is true a Believer may say, I know not whether he loved me or not, but sure I am it is not his Faith that says so, but Unbelief ; but the stronger that his Faith is, to be sure the more will he be able to say he loved me, and the more he can say this, the more can he say the other also, *I love him* : And there is Obedience, Gospel-obedience, the Obedience of Faith, which is a loving Obedience, for the Law of Christ is a Law of Love. It is Blasphemy against the Love of God to reproach it, as a Mother of Licentiousness, and a Nurse of carnal Security. They that have the Love of God in their Eye, can take no encouragement from thence to sin, for Sin tends to cloud that Light, wherein they rejoice. If it were possible for a Believer to think that God loves him, and thereupon should take encouragement to sin, then I am bold to say, it is not the Faith of God's Operation takes place at that Time with him, but only a Fancy, and a strong Temptation of Satan, working upon that Fancy: For true Faith of God's Love, brings Holiness, Love and Obedience along with it, as natively as the Rising-Sun brings Light. God's Love of Bounty displayed does as natively bring in our Love of Duty, as it is natural for the Fire to bring heat. Is it possible that God's communicating his Thoughts of Peace to a Child will embolden him to new Acts of Treason ? No, if the Sense of God's Love did not wear off, and Security and Unwatchfulness wear on, the Believer's Love would ay be flaming in the Fire of God's Love. They have no Experience of the Love of God, who think that the Discovery thereof would give them a Licence to transgress.

4. Hence we see, that as the Believer is perfectly free from vindictive Wrath, from the Curse and penal Sanction of the Law, so his Gospel-obedience is not influenced by *slavish Fear of Hell*, but by the Love of God. How can the Man that is actually justified and *accepted in the Beloved*, and so the actual Object of God's everlasting unchangeable Love ever fall under his vindictive Wrath, which is the threatening and sentence of the Law as a Covenant of Works? And how can the Believer, that is obliged to believe this Love, be ever obliged to serve from a Fear of Hell and vindictive Wrath? That he may thro' Unbelief apprehend God's vindictive Wrath, and Fear to be thrown into Hell, is plain from common Experience, but that the Fear of Hell should be either a Gospel-grace, or a Believer's Duty, is some of the new Divinity of our Day. Filial Child-like Fear, which is the Believer's Duty at all Times, is every way consistent with Love, yea supposes and imports the Faith of God's fatherly Love; but slavish Fear of Hell and vindictive Wrath excludes and opposes it, see the Context, ver. 18. *There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out slavish and tormenting Fear.*

5. Hence we may see the Difference betwixt the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. The Order of the Covenant of Works is, in some Respect, quite cross to the Order here set down in our Text; for in the Covenant of Works, our Love of Duty was first to take place, and after that God's Love of Bounty as the Reward of our perfect Love and Obedience, according to the old Covenant Paction; whereas in the Covenant of Grace, God first shews his Love of Bounty, and then follows our Love of Duty. Never does the Soul turn his Affections towards God, if the Heart of God be not first set upon him. Herein differ Works in the New Covenant (for Love, as I said before, is the Sum of all Work and Obedience) from Works in the Old Covenant. In the legal Covenant, our Love and Work is first, and then God's Favour and Justification; but in the Gospel-Covenant God's Love and Favour

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Favour in Justification is first, and then our Love and Obedience follows, as the same Day that the Waters went off from the Earth and was gathered into the Sea, the Earth was adorned with Grass and Flowers, and was fruitful; so when the Deluge of Wrath goes off from the Conscience, and the Favour of God appears in Justification, then it is presently adorned with the Graces of the Spirit and Love among the Chief of them springing up; whatever other Motive engages to Obedience here, yet Love is the most prevalent Motive, and here Gratitude influences to Obedience. In a Word, the Covenant of Works was properly conditional to us, but the Covenant of Grace, however conditional to Christ, who hath performed the whole Condition in his Obedience to the Death, yet to us it is absolutely free and unconditional. Upon what Condition have we God's Love and Favour? Does not his Love prevent all Conditions? *He first loved us*, his Love prevents the true proper Condition it self, namely, Christ's Obedience, for his Love sent him to perform the same, much more does it prevent all that Men call Conditions. O, how far is our Obedience, even the Obedience of Faith, from having any Causality or proper federal Conditionality in obtaining Salvation, seeing our imperfect Love and Obedience here is not the Cause, but the Effect of God's Love and Favour partly displayed, and our perfect Love and Obedience in Heaven will be the Effect of the full Vision of his glorious Grace in Heaven, *where we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

6. Hence we may see the Blasphemy of these who say, they are Believers in Christ and yet are not Lovers of God, and who pretend to believe the Grace of God, *and yet turn his Grace to lasciviousness*, by continuing in Enmity against him, and discover their Enmity by their ungodly Practices; *the Grace of God that brings Salvation teaches us quite contrary*, what the Law teaches preceptively the Gospel teaches effectively, *viz. to deny Ungodliness*, &c. Tit. ii. 11, 12.

She is not the Spouse of Christ, but an Adulteress, that impudently abuses his Love. They can have no true Evidence of God's love to them, who have no love to him; for our Love to him is the native Result of his Love to us, *We love him because he first loved us.* The Love of God discovered knocks down the natural Enmity which is the Root of all Disobedience, and influences to Love, which is the Sum of all Obedience.

7. See hence the eminent Privilege of the Saints whatever low Thoughts the World may have of them. It is an Honour to stand in the Presence of Princes, tho' but as Servants, what Honour then have all the Saints to stand with Boldness in the Presence of God and enjoy his Bosom Love? The Queen of *Sheba* pronounced a Blessing on the Servants of *Solomon*, who stood before him and heard his Wisdom, how much more blessed are they who stand continually before the God of *Solomon*, hearing his Wisdom and enjoying his Love? As they are happy, so are they safe. Here is a safe sweet Retreat to the Saints in all the Trials, Reproaches and Misrepresentations they undergo in the World. When a Child is abused in the Street by Strangers, he runs with speed to the Bosom of his Father, there he makes his Complaint, and is comforted. In all the hard Censures and Tongue-Persecutions which the Saints meet withal in the Streets of the World, they may run to their Father, and be comforted; his Love can counterballance all the World's Frowns. O! how are they privileged beyond all the hypocritical World! Hypocrites for the most part cannot be known or differenced from Saints, in regard of their external Duty and Enjoyment, but yet while they are living in the love of their Lusts, the Saints are sweetly wrapt up in the Bosom of God's Love, they have this Meat to eat and Refreshment in the Banqueting-house, wherein others have no share.

8. Hence see where it is we may get our Enmity killed, and our Love quickened, it is even in the Love  
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of God. What is the Reason that the World have no Love to God? Why, they cannot believe his Love and Good-will thro' Christ, and so they live in Enmity. What is the Reason that Believers have so little love to God? Even because their Faith of his *love* is so weak. It is by Faith we know, *that God is in Christ reconciling the World to himself*; it is by Faith, *we see the King in his Beauty*, and so cannot but love him. It is by Faith, *that we hear his Voice*, and understand his Words of Grace, and say it is, *the Voice of my Beloved*; it is by Faith we embrace the *Promises*, which are so many Messages of Love; It is by Faith, we *receive out of Christ's Fulness Grace for Grace*; or, as the Word may be rendered, *Love for Love*. Faith breaks the Shell of the Promise, and then eats the Kernel of God's Love and Grace that is there. Faith is the Bucket wherewith we draw, Christ is the Well, God is the Fountain, and Love is the Water that we draw; O! what get you in Christ, poor Soul whenever you go to him? Can you not say, O, I get more *love* to God than I had! I never was near him but I got a Bucketful of Love to God; out of his Fulness, *we receive Grace for Grace*, and *Love for Love*. In a Word, by Faith, *we behold the Glory of the Lord as in a Glass, and are changed into the same Image*, and the Image of God is *love*. O! then the little Faith that takes place in our Day, makes little *love* to God and his People; Faith and Love are like Twins that are born together, and live and die together. Go to the Root of all our Backslidings, and you'll find it Unbelief, *an evil Heart of Unbelief, &c.*

*Examination.* Try your State by this Doctrine, whether or not you be in a State of Favour with God, and the Objects of his Love in a special manner. How shall I know if he hath loved me? You may know it by that Fruit and Evidence of it in the Text; if he hath manifested his Love savingly to you, then you'll love him, because he hath loved you. *Quest.* How shall I know if I have that Love to him, that is  
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the Fruit and Effect of his first loving me? *Answ.* 1. If your Love to him, be such as is the Fruit of his Love to you, then you have been convinced of your natural Enmity, and that you never had any Love, nor could have it, unless the Lord in Love had in some measure manifested himself in his Grace. Many speak of their loving God all their Days, as if it were natural for them to love God; poor Things, they never saw or considered, that they were born with a Dagger of Enmity in their Hearts against God. These that truly love him have seen their want of Love, and something of the Power and Strength of their Enmity, and got it in some measure broken in a Day of Power. 2. If you have such Love to him, as is the Fruit of his Love to you, then you have seen his Glory, and particularly the Glory of his Grace, and Love to draw out your Love towards him. *Shew me thy Glory*, says *Moses* to God, *yea*, says God, *I'll make all my Goodness pass before thee*. His Goodness and his Love is his Glory. If you have seen his Glory, surely you *count all Things but Loss and Dung in Comparison of him*. 3. If you have such Love, as is the Fruit of his Love, then his loveliness and excellency hath engaged you to chuse him, to chuse himself for your God, his Christ for your Husband, his Covenant for your Charter, his Precepts for your Rule, his People for your Companions, his Purchase for your Jointure, his Spirit for your Guide, his Promise for your Cordial, his Glory for your Aim. If you have chosen him thus, and resolve to abide by your Choice, it is a Fruit of his chusing you from Eternity: *You have not chosen me first, but I have chosen you*. 4. If you have such love to him, as is the Fruit of his loving you, then it is the Faith of his Love, that in a special manner will influence you to Obedience in all the Duties of Religion, *If you love me keep my Commandments*: Yea, the Faith of his Love will influence you to such a love to him, as will bring forth all the Fruits of true Love. And here I'll tell you some of the Fruits of true Love to God, by which you may try your Love to him.



1. One Fruit of true Love is this, true Love will make you love to be with him on Earth, and long to be with him in Heaven. 1. On the one Hand, true Love will make you love to be with him on Earth, and this Love will make you rejoyce when he is present, saying, *O, my Soul shall rejoyce in God my Saviour*; and it will make you lament when he is absent, saying, *O, that I knew where I might find him*; you'll love to be with him in your Desire, saying, *He is the Desire of all Nations*, and the Desire of my Soul; you'll love to be with him in your Delight, saying, *A Bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me, he shall ly all Night betwixt my Breasts*; you'll love to be with him in your Walk and Conversation, desiring to have your Conversation in Heaven, and to walk with him; you'll love to be with him in your Esteem, saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none in Earth that I desire besides thee*; you'll love to be with him in your Thoughts and Meditations, saying, *My Meditation of him shall be sweet*; you'll love to be with him in your Duties and Performances, in reading and hearing, and singing, in communicating, in praying; you'll love to be with him, and to have him with you; particularly to be with him in Prayer is the most frequent Thing with the Believer, how does he love to embosom himself to his God. The Legalist may do the Duty, but to be with Christ in it, is what he is not much taken up with; the Believer is taken up with Prayer as a Mean of Communion with God. O, I dō not bide away from him, tho' he shut the Door upon me, and cover himself with a Cloud, that my Prayer cannot pass through; I dō not stay away from him. It is one of the main Things that makes Earth tolerable to the Believer, that he hath sometimes Access to God in Christ by the Spirit in Prayer. If it were not for some sweet Meetings that he hath with the Lord this Way, he would even be crying, O what a weary place is this Earth! O let me out of it! I say the true Lover loves to be with God, and to have God with him. How does he love to have God with him?

him? By his sanctifying Grace, by his enlightning, enlarging, enlivening, and comforting Grace. True Lovers love one anothers Company. And, 2. As the true Lover of Christ loves to be with him here, so on the other Hand, he longs to be with him hereafter. O, to be in the place of perfect Love, where there will be an eternal Emanation of the Love of God; O, to be in the Place of perfect Likeness to Christ, *For when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Tho' they are reconciled to his Will, and made content to abide here, while he pleases, yet they are even longing for that Day, when they shall have the immediate Fruition of him, and be delivered from all Sin; they desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ which is best of all. A carnal Man may say, O, to be out of an ill World; but the Heart of the true Lover says, O, *to be with Christ.* It is true, when the Believer's Love is in fresh Exercise, he will even sometime be willing to abide in this World, notwithstanding of all the Troubles and Trials that are in it, if so be he may glorify God in it, whether by suffering for him, or giving a Testimony against Sin, and for the Truth and Honour of the Lord Jesus. O, if I may be of any Use to any of thine, if I may be of any Service to thy Majesty, and glorify thee by doing or suffering; if thou wilt help me to serve and honour thee in my Life, let me even beg from Door to Door in the Wilderness; through Grace I'll cheerfully endure any Trouble, and glory in my Infirmities, *That the Power of Christ may rest upon me.* This Submission is not inconsistent with his longing to be with the Lord. Thus, I say, true Lovers of God, they love to be with him on Earth, and long to be with him in Heaven.

2. True Love will make you long to be like him, saying, O, *to be holy as God is holy, O, to be conform to the Image of his Son, O, to be like unto Christ.* Indeed the Man that hath most of the Image of God, will readily see himself the most unlike to him, and look upon himself as the most unholy Person on Earth.

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O, my Understanding is like a dark Dungeon, my Will is like a Devil, and my Heart like a Hell; and yet something of the Light of God it is that thus discovers him to himself, so unlike to God, and something of the Love of God it is that makes him love to be like him, and desire above all Things to be quit of Sin, which is the Devil's Image, and to be indued with Holiness, which is God's Image.

3. True Love will make you love to live upon him: You'll love to live upon God the *Fountain of living Water*, and love to live upon Christ for *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*. The Lover of God is one that loves to live by Faith on the Son of God; to him to live is Christ, Christ is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of his Life, the Food and Medicine of his Life, the Author and Restorer of his Life, and the whole Business of his Life. Many have little Business with Christ; but the true Believer, the true Lover, Christ is the whole Business of his Life; like the Woman that, they say, took the Body of her dead Husband and grind it to Powder, and drank the Powder in her daily Drink, and so made her Body a living Tomb for her dead Husband; the Believer is to live still upon a dead and crucified Husband.

4. True Love to God will make you love to reverence him; godly Fear is a true Mark of Love, you'll have a holy Fear of displeasing him, you'll have a jealous Fear, lest your deceitful Heart lead you aside from him. *We receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved, &c.* Heb. xii. 28. *For our God is a consuming Fire*. All this is inconsistent with the slavish Fear of Hell: For the Faith of receiving the Kingdom that cannot be moved; and the Fear of Hell, which is a being excluded from that Kingdom, are contradictory; but let us Fear our God in Christ, who hath discovered himself in Christ to be even a consuming Fire; for this Fire of infinite Justice took hold of the Man Christ Jesus. When God dwelling in the Bush of our Nature, the Bush burned in the Flame of Divine Wrath, and

and Justice was satisfied this Way ; herein God gave a more awful Instance of his being a *consuming Fire*, in taking Vengeance upon Sin in the Surety, than can be given by all the Flames of Hell, in which the Wicked will burn for Eternity. But here God being in the Bush, the Bush burnt, but was not consumed ; *He that was dead is alive, and behold he liveth for evermore.* But we may turn aside and see this great Sight, the Bush burning, Christ satisfying Divine Justice ; and what in the World should more influence to a holy Fear than this.

5. True Love will make you love to think well of him, and think no Evil of him. *Love thinketh no Evil*, says the Apostle, you will entertain good Thoughts of God, and construct all he does in the best Sense ; tho' in Affliction a Saint may have harsh Thoughts of God, and under a Fit of Temptation, yet habitually he entertains good Thoughts of all God's Dealings towards him ; this or that Dispensation or Affliction, however severe, is either to mortify some Lust, or to exercise some Grace, or to discover some Corruption, and remove it. " O, how good is he that will not let me alone in my Sins, nor let me go with my Faults, nor *cease to be a Reprover* ; Love thinks no Evil."

6. True Love will make you love what he loves, and hate what he hates, and also love as he loves, and hates as he hates. 1. True Love will make you love what he loves, and hate what he hates ; and particularly they love his Friends, and hate his Enemies. 1. They love his Friends, his Friends in Office, and his Friends in Heart. 1. His Friends in Office, his Ministers, whose Office it is to commend Christ ; surely they that love God, will love his Friends ; they that love Christ the Bridegroom, will love the Friends of the Bridegroom, whose Work it is to set him forth. *How beautiful*, Rom. x. 15. *upon the Mountains*, &c. The Reason why they love such, is, Because it is their Work, to open Christ's Love-letter that is sent to his Bride, and to read it, and explain it to the Bride, and because they love the sweet Doctrine of the Gospel.

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Some pretend a great love to the Precepts of the Law, but for the Doctrine of the Gospel, and free Justification without the Works of the Law, they suspect that as *Antinomian* Stuff, opposite to the Law; they will mock at Christ's Messengers when they preach the Doctrine of Grace. But I seek no further Evidence of an Enemy to Christ than that; some love all Preachers, and all Preaching alike, they cannot discern betwixt the one and the other: If you preach the Doctrine of the Gospel to them, they love that; if you preach the Covenant of Works to them, and bid them do so and so, and thereupon they shall be justified before God, they love that too, all is Fish that comes in the Net with them; but the Sheep of Christ *know his Voice*, and the Voice of the Shepherds that convey his Voice, and Mind to them, is sweet and beautiful, and lovely to them. 2. They love his Friends in Heart, as well as his Friends in Office; the Saints, *The excellent Ones of the Earth, are these in whom is all their Delight; He that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten.* They love the Brethren, as in the Verse following the Text. *How can one say that he loves God, whom he hath not seen, &c.?* He that loves the Parent, will love the Child; they that love God will love his Children that have his Image, as a Man will love the very Picture of the Person whom he loves; they love the Saints, tho' poor, as a Man will love Gold; tho' in a Rag, and also will love them tho' afflicted, even as Mettal in a Furnace may be loved. 2. As the true Lovers of God will love his Friends, so they will hate his Foes and Enemies, whether it be his open Enemies without, or his secret Enemies within. 1. His open Enemies without, even all the Wicked and ungodly World; *Do not I hate them that hate thee, and am grieved with them that rise up against thee?* They that can delight in Fellowship with these that are Drunkards, Swearers, and Blaphemers of the Name of God, surely they cannot have the Love of God, at least in Exercise; the true Lover of God hates the Wicked as such. It is true, as they are the Children

of *Adam, Bone of their Bone, and Flesh of their Flesh*, as they are poor miserable Creatures like themselves, they love them with a Love of Pity ; but as Enemies to God, and in Rebellion against him, they can have no Delight in them, their Company is a Burden to them. 2. As they hate his open Enemies without, so they hate his secret Enemies within, and these are their own Lusts and Corruptions. They *hate Sin who love God*, and are engaged in a Warfare against Sin, and their own Lusts. He that loves God hates Sin, whether in himself or others ; he hates Sin as God's Enemy, and as that which is displeasing and dishonouring to him, and as that which mars Communion with God, that provokes him to be angry, and unfits them for his Service. O, that loathsome, ugly Thing Sin, that Evil of Evils, and Devil of Devils : The Man pursues it to Death, and cannot rest till he get his Hands wrung, as it were, in its Heart's Blood ; they have taken up Arms against it, in the Name of the Lord, and resolved never to lay them down, till it be mortified and killed. They find indeed sometimes Sin very lively and strong in them, and themselves *led Captive by the Law of Sin* ; but this animates them so much the more to pursue it to Death ; and as they hate Sin in themselves, so also in others, *I beheld Transgressors and was grieved*. I would not give much for your Pretensions to Love, if you have no Zeal against Sin ; Love is the Fire, Zeal is the Flame, they that love the Lord will shew forth Indignation against Sin. Thus, I say, true Lovers of God will love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

2. True Love will not only hate *what* he hates, and love *what* he loves, but hates *as* he hates, and love *as* he loves. 1. They will hate as he hates, they will hate Sin, as God hates it ; I speak not of Degrees, but of Similitude. 1. God hates Sin with a natural Hatred, as opposite to his Nature, Will, and Law, and dishonouring to him ; so the true Lovers of God will hate Sin with a natural Hatred ;

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I mean by Virtue of his new Nature, he will hate it as opposite to God's Nature and Will, and dishonouring to his God. 2. God hates Sin with a *perfect* Hatred, and so does the true Lover of God; they say of God's Enemies within them, as *David*, *Psal. cxxxix. 21. I hate them with a perfect Hatred*, their Hatred is going on to Perfection. 3. God hates Sin with an *everlasting* Hatred, he will never be reconciled with it; so the true Lover of God hates Sin with an everlasting Hatred, a durable Hatred; they will never be Friends with it. 4. God hates Sin with a *grievous* Hatred; Sin grieves his Spirit, and is as it were a Burden to him, he is pressed under it as a Cart under Sheaves; so the true Lover is *grieved with the Body of Sin and Death*, and pressed under it. 5. God hates Sin with a *parting separating* Hatred, he casts it away with Loathing and Abhorrence, *being of purer Eyes than that he can behold Iniquity*; so the true Lover hates Sin so as to part with it, and separate from it; and while he cannot get himself rid of it, he loaths himself for it. 6. God hates Sin with an *avenging* Hatred; he takes Vengeance upon it where ever it is, even when it was found but *imputatively* in Christ, he took Vengeance upon it in the Surety; so the true Lover of God hates Sin with an avenging Hatred; yea, what *Revenge* does he meditate against it, *2 Cor. vii. 11.* He would sometimes be at *Sampson's* Work, to pull down the House of that Tabernacle upon the *Philistines*, to be avenged upon it, and cannot rest till it be destroyed; he looks upon himself as wretched, so long as it remains with him. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me, &c.* Thus he hates as God hates.

2. They love as God loves. 'Tis true God's Love to them is infinite, their Love, is but finite, his Love to them is the Love of a God, their Love to him is but the Love of Creatures; yet their Love bears some Resemblance of his Love. (1.) God's Love to his Children is a *remembering* Love. He never forgets them, *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child,*

&c. So true Love to God is a remembring Love ; they cannot forget God, *They remember his Love more than Wine. I'll never forget thy Precepts, for by them thou hast quickned me.* I can never forget such a Word, such a Glance, such a Visit, such a Day, such a Sermon, such a Bank, such a Brae, such a Chamber where God manifested himself. (2.) God's Love to his People is a *hearty and cordial Love, he Loves them with all his Heart* : So where true Love is, it will be *with all the Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength* ; as with the Heart Man believes, so with the Heart the Believer loves. (3.) God's Love to his People is a *manifested Love*, he does not conceal his Love but discovers it ; so true Love to God will be a manifested Love, it will manifest it self, and vent it self in Prayer, in Praises, in Zeal, in Obedience, *If you Love me keep my Commandments.* The true Lover will vent his Love by desiring to keep Christ's Words, keeping them in the Heart, *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart*, &c. keeping them in the Practice, *By ordering the Conversation aright.* (4.) God's Love to his People is an *uniting Love*, it brings them to Union with himself ; so true Love to God is uniting, desires Union, and cleaves to the Lord ; it affects Nearness, more and more Nearness, and still more and more and more Nearness. (5.) God's Love to his People is a *prevailing Love*. It had many Hindrances in its way, Mountains of Guilt, Mountains of Sin, Mountains of Provocation, yet he did not call back his Love again ; even so, true Love to God, notwithstanding of Hindrances and Opposition from Earth and Hell, and Corruption within, yet is not drawn back, but labours to prevail, and will thro' Grace fight its Way thro' all Difficulties, *for Love is strong as Death.* (6.) God's Love to his People, is a *rejoicing Love*, he rejoiceth in his Love ; so where true Love to God is, the Man will rejoice in his Love, delight in God and Christ, and *be joyful in the God of his Salvation.* (7.) God's Love to his People is a *resting Love*, Zeph. v. 17. *He Rests in his Love.* When  
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comes it never thinks of removing any more, *this is my Rest, here will I stay*; so where true Love to God is, it is a resting Love, it says, *return to thy Rest, O my Soul*: The true Lover of God hath no other resting Place but a God in Christ. (8.) God's Love to his People, is a *communicative* Love, his Love inclines him, and engages him to make over himself and all that he hath for the Good of his People; so where true Love to God is, 'tis such a *communicative* Love, that it makes the Soul give himself, and all that he is and hath to the Lord; he commits his Soul, Body and all the Concerns of his Salvation to him. (9) God's Love to his People is a *distinguishing* Love, he loves them above all others, *since thou wast precious in my Sight*, &c. Isa. xliii. 3, 4. So their Love to him is superlative Love, they love him above all Things, and in all Things he hath the Preeminence. (10.) God's Love to his People *is in Christ*, they are accepted in the *Beloved*; so true Love to God, is a Love to God in Christ, out of Christ they cannot love him, but fear and fly from him; but in Christ he is amiable and lovely to them. Now by these Things you may try whether you love God, so as your Love is a Fruit of his first loving you.

*Exhortation.* Is God's Love to his People the cause of their Love to him, then be exhorted, (1.) To seek the View of God's Love to you. (2.) To render him Love for Love. (1.) Seek a *View* of God's Love to you, say not in your Heart, Alas, all are not loved of God, and it may be not you: But rather say, Many are the Objects of his Love, and why not me? Why, say you, the first Object of Faith cannot be to believe that God hath loved me? Indeed you cannot know God's Love to you till he manifest the same, and he does not manifest his Love but in Christ, in whom is proclaimed *Peace on Earth and Good will towards Men*, because Christ hath brought in Glory to God in the Highest; and therefore the way to know the Love of God to you, is to believe in his beloved Son, and so to believe his Love and Good-will in him;

and in coming to him the Love of God is known and believed, How do the Saints win to know the Love of God to them? It is even by believing his Love in Christ, 1 John iv 16. *We have known and believed the Love that God hath to us.* If you look to God out of Christ, you never see his Love to you, or any Sinner like you, but Wrath and Vengeance issued out against you: But if you look to God in Christ, then you may see Good-will towards Men, for *God is in Christ reconciling the World to himself.* Why, say you, I cannot find any Love in my Heart towards God, and therefore how can I believe his Love, or his Heart to be towards me? Indeed, Man, you'll never Love God till you take up something of his Love and Good-will towards you; your way of doing is a preposterous Course, and a way to rob God of his Glory, to think you must love him first, and then expect that he will love you: Lay down your carnal Reasoning, and seek Grace to apprehend the Mercy of God in Christ, and that will open your Soul to let out Love towards him. Why, say you, I see no Ground why he should love me! there is no Cause, no Reason in the World, but all the Reason in the World, why he should not love me, and therefore how can I be perswaded of his Thoughts of Love towards me? *Answer,* God speaks Love, Mercy and Good-will towards you Man, you Woman, by this Gospel, as particularly as ever he did to any Elect Soul, the Day before he met with the Day of Power: For the general Tenders of Grace in the Gospel are to all, and as for a Cause of Love, he hath as much Cause to fix his Love on you as ever he had upon any of the Children of Men, that is, he had no Cause at all without himself; and if you can win to believe his Grace and Good-will towards you, and that by a Faith of his own Operation, you shall not be deceived. When I call you to believe thus, I am not calling you to fancy that God loves you, or to perswade your selves in a natural way; nay, I call you to a saving Faith, which I know you can never attain unto without a pull of Omnipotency, and if that

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Power accompany the Call, then the Duty called to will be put in Practice, and not otherwise; therefore O! seek the Power of God to perswade you of the Good-will of God in Christ. All that hear me are obliged to receive Christ as a Token of God's Love, *For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, and receiveth him, might not perish, &c. He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.* If there be insuperable Difficulties and Objections in your way, I cannot help it; the God who calls you can remove them, but it is at your Peril, if you reject his Call, you shall never have it to say in Hell that the Good-will and Favour of God was never proclaim'd to you, for I take the Mountains and Hills that are in your View to Witness, that I proclaim thro' Christ, *Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men*, and that, *God is in Christ reconciling the World to himself.* Why would you have the greatest Sinner, and vilest Debauchee among us all to believe the Love and Good-will of God towards them? *Answer,* While you're in a sinful State, you're indeed under the Wrath and Curse of God; and if you continue therein, you'll be damned for ever as sure as God lives, and you'll continue therein for ever, unless you come to get the Apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ: But whenever you get this Apprehension of God's Love, then I defy you to continue in a State of Sin, or in a Course of Sin and Enmity. Will a Man receive Christ and believe the Love of God in him, and yet keep fast hold of his Lusts? Nay I defy him, it is impossible, and therefore it is to kill your Enmity and destroy your Sin that God would have you to believe his Good-will in Christ. I remember that Story of a godly Man that said to a Witch, when nothing else could soften her Heart, *I do, says he, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, charge you to come to Christ for Salvation, to come to him for Faith, Repentance, and Remission of Sin, and you shall have Acceptance, and be received into the Favour of God in him;* the poor Wretch was made to say, *O Sir! Shall I believe your Words?* *My Life for you,* says he,  
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Ghost; Christ is the Channel, Love in the Father is like Honey in the Flower, it must be in the Comb, before it be for our Use, Christ must extract and prepare this Honey for us. And O, how sweet is that Love, that runs thro' such a Channel. In a Word, Consider, the *Excellency* of the Grace of *Love*. Love to God is the *fulfilling of the Law*, all that it requires is *Love*; *Love* is the great Qualification of the Saints above; the more *Love* you have, the more like Heaven will you be, and the more *Love* the more Meetness for Heaven: Heaven would be a Burden, and a Weariness to you; if you had not *Love* you would throw your self out of Heaven into Hell. If you have *Love* you will find it make every Duty pleasant, the Obedience of *Love* is sweet Obedience. Yea, *Love* will make all your Crosses to be Comforts; where there is little or no *Love*, the Cross is unsupportable; the Man cries, O, a bitter Cross! O, the Gall and Wormwood! Yea, but *Love* would be like the Tree cast into the Waters of *Marah*, to make them become sweet. If you have much *Love* it will make you say of Affliction, O, this is the Cup that my kind Father hath put in my Hand, *And shall I not drink it?* Welcome whatever he sends. O love the Lord ye his Saints, and manifest your *Love* by your Obedience; will you render him Hatred for *Love*? O, let his *Love* to you warm your Heart with *Love* to him, and in order thereto,

1. O do not doubt of his *Love* to you, beware of renouncing that which engages you to love him; it is the Devil's great Aim to have you doubting God's *Love*, that so you may not love God again.
2. Attend all his *Love* Visits, and thankfully receive them; think not little of his ordinary Visits, when in any Measure he manifests his *Love* thro' the Lattices of Ordinances; despise not the Day of *small Things*, and especially, O make much of his extraordinary *Love* Visits, when he mounts you up at any Time into the *Chariot paved with Love*.
3. Take heed of abusing his *Love*, beware of *spotting your Garments with the Flesh*, after God has spread his Skirt over you: To Sin against *Love* is a dreadfully aggravated Sin. It was a foul blot upon

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*Solomon* that his Heart was turned from the Lord, *After that the Lord God of Israel had appeared to him twice*, 1 Kings xi. 9. 4. Beware of Confidence in the Flesh, and expecting that your Love should influence God to do you Good; *the Love of Christ must constrain you*; think not that your Duties and Obedience should constrain him. O beware of inverting the Gospel at this Rate, and turning it upside down. If his Love excite you to Love and Obedience, then your Love and Obedience does not excite him to love you. We might fear every Day that the Heart of God would be turned to hate us, if our Hopes of abiding in his Favour were built upon our best Love and Obedience. I would send away the Haters of God with a Word of Terror. Know that if you cannot be persuaded to the Love of God, if his Love does not break you in Time, his Vengeance will break you to Eternity. *The Enemies of the Lord shall be like the Fat of Rams, they shall consume, into Smoak shall they consume away.* If you love not Christ, know what the Apostle says, *If any Man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.* I'll tell you what is said, *The Day is coming, wherein you shall say to the Rocks and Mountains, fall on us, &c.* You'll ly for ever under the fiery Mountain of Divine Vengeance. I'll tell you what is yet sadder, and you'll think strange what that can be; in short it is sad, that before this Day eight Days, all that I am saying will be forgotten. Yea, before the Morrow at this Time, the Impression of all will be gone, &c. I would send away the Lovers of Christ, the Lovers of God with a Word of Comfort. You love God, and God loves you, and God's Love to you is Ground of Comfort. 1. In what you have; what you have in Possession, you have it with a Blessing, what you have in Expectation in the Promise, is in Love; and therefore the Promise is free, because of God's Love in it; the Promise is firm, because of his Love in it. Comfort, 2. In what you want; since you have God's Love, *you shall not want.* Comfort in what you fear, *you need not fear no Evil, &c.* Comfort in what  
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you do, *All your Services will be accepted*, all your Sins pardoned, tho' he should *take Vengeance on your Inventions*. Comfort in what you suffer, you shall be sustained and supported; and tho' you may suffer the Loss of Gifts, Goods, Liberty, Life, yet you cannot lose God, Christ, the Spirit, Grace, Heaven, or God's everlasting *Love*. O go away with the comfortable Sense of his *Love*. In a Word, Are you Lovers of God? O go away rejoicing in it, *that he first loved you*; he is not behind Hand with you, *he loved you before you loved him*. You was elected by the Grace of God from Eternity; you was redeemed by the Blood of Christ, you're certainly effectually called; *For they that love him, are the called according to his Purpose*; and the Day comes, when you shall enjoy the Object of your *Love* in a full Manner. If you be true lovers of Christ, I certify you the Time is coming, when you shall see *Christ as he is, and be for ever with the Lord*, and enjoy him for evermore, and love without Decay, and love without Wearying shall be your everlasting Exercise: You shall rejoice in an immediate Enjoyment of him. You were upon his Heart from Eternity; You are upon his Heart this Day in Heaven, for you his Eternal Son came to the World, for you he lived, for you he died, your love to Christ is a Reflex of his and his Father's love to you; and not a true lover of Christ here, but hath as good Ground to say as ever Paul had, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*; your love to him is an infallible Pledge of his antient love to you, a Pledge of his present love to you, and a Pledge of the future Enjoyment of him. O let your Heart, and Life, and Tongue, and all that is within you, and without you, and about you, vent love to him, and say, *We love him, because he first loved us*.

F I N I S.



